SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, I completely agree with the Member that the Postal Service is a social obligation of the Government. In fact, in one of the things that is proposed, and our hon. Member was also mentioning about amendments, the purpose is to retain in Government hands the sole monopoly for delivery of letters. So, this question of closing down uneconomic branches, I will, certainly, go into that matter. I have just started studying the subject. But the real viability is going to come by modernising our post offices so that they become communication hubs, and other services can be added on, and provided through the postal service to the postal department also. I will just give one example and then sit down. For example, a postman has been given a mobile phone, which is not available in the village. When he goes to a village, that village gets connected. So, these are very popular services. This kind of services will be added on. I am discussing with the Telecom Department, the Postal Department and the Information Technology Department, all the three together, as to how to strengthen post offices, in general. As far as the last point is concerned, I am just told that there is no order to close the post offices. It is only to relocate them in needy areas. That will not require any job to be lost.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Sir, actually, it is just like closing down the office in a different manner. Will the hon. Minister go through that order and let me know the position?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: I will certainly do that.

*331. [The Questioner (Shri Vijay J. Darda) was absent. For answer *vide* page 38 *infra*.]

Import of Palmolien

*332. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ:†
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether allocation of RBD Palmolein for distribution through PDS has been stopped;

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bachani Lekhraj.

(b) whether import of RBD palmolein by the State has declined drastically as it costs heavy due to high import duty levied on it;

(c) whether in view of the above, Government would consider to give permission to the State Government of Gujarat to import 18,000 tonnes of crude palmolein through STC with 45 per cent duty under the Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ); and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Following the easy availability of edible oils in the open market, it has been decided, for the present, not to import edible oils for distribution through the Public Distribution System (PDS). Limited off-take of edible oil under the PDS is attributed to the availability of imported edible oils, including RBD palmolein, in the market, which are imported by private traders on OGL, at comparable prices.

2. While there is no request relating to import of crude palmolein of the Government of Gujarat, a proposal in respect of RBD palmolein stands referred to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this behalf.

श्री लेखराज बचानी: चेयरमैन सर, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी को बताना चाहता हूं कि वैसे तो लोग गुजरात में मूंगफली का तेल खाते हैं, लेकिन 25 फीसदी से ज्यादा लोग, गरीब लोग बिलो पावर्टी के लोग उसको खरीद नहीं सकते हैं। इसीलिए हमारी जानकारी है कि गुजरात गवर्नमेंट ने 18 हजार मीट्रिक टन पामोलीन इम्पोर्ट करने के लिए वह भी पब्लिक डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन सिस्टम के लिए डिमांड की है। छोटे लोग तो मस्टर्ड ऑयल खाते नहीं हैं। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या गुजरात गवर्नमेंट ने 12 हजार से लेकर 18 हजार मीट्रिक टन तक आर०बी०डी० पामोलीन की डिमांड की है? अगर मांग की है तो क्या आप देने वाले हैं? यदि वे अब आपसे परमीशन मांगेंगे तो क्या आप परमीशन देने वाले हैं या नहीं।

श्री सभापति: वे मांग आने के बाद में परमीशन की बात करेंगे।

श्री लेखराज बचानी: सर, मेरी जानकारी के अनुसार परमीशन मांगी है।

श्री सभापति: अगर परमीशन मांगी है तो मंत्री जी जवाब में बता देंगे।

SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD: Sir, the hon. Member has asked about the import of crude palmolein. The State Government of Gujarat had made a request for importing RBD palmolein. Crude palmolein is freely importable. There is just 30 per cent duty on it. The hon. Member has put the question of importing 18,000 tonnes of crude palmolein with 45 per cent duty under the Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ). The request of the Gujarat Government has been considered. A proposal was sent to the Ministry of Commerce with some conditions. They have cleared the proposal for RBD palm oil and not for the RBD palmolein. They have sent the proposal to the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance is yet to take the decision.

श्री लेखराज बचानी: सर, मेरा सेकेंड सप्लीमेंट्री क्वेश्चन है। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: अब छोड़िए। आपके क्वेश्चन का जवाब तो मिल गया है।

श्री लेखराज बचानी: सर, जो एडीबल ऑयल इम्पोर्ट किया जाता है, सबके ऊपर टैरिफ 45 परसेंट है और पामोलिन के ऊपर 100 परसेंट टैरिफ है। इसीलिए ओपन मार्केट में इम्पोर्ट नहीं कर सकते हैं। गरीबों के लिए, मध्यमवर्ग के लोगों के लिए और बिलो पावर्टी लाइन के नीचे रहने वाले लोगों के लिए कोई दूसरा अल्टरनेटिव नहीं है। इसलिए क्या सरकार कामर्स मिनिस्ट्री को यह बात रेफर करेगी कि जो टैरिफ 100 परसेंट है उसको घटाकर 45 परसेंट कर दे?

श्री सभापति: प्रो॰ अलका क्षत्रिय । आप क्वेश्चन पूछिए।

प्रो॰ अलका क्षत्रिय: धन्यवाद सभापति महोदय। सरकार गरीबों की मदद करने की बात कहती है और सरकार का यह दायित्व भी है। लेकिन माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में कहा है कि खाद्य तेलों का पी॰डी॰एस॰ और मार्केट रेट एक है और इसकी उपलब्धता पर्याप्त है तो गरीबों की मदद करने के लिए क्या सरकार पी॰डी॰एस॰ के माध्यम से डिस्ट्रीब्यूट होने वाले तेल का मूल्य कम करना चाहती है या सरकार का कोई ऐसा प्रस्ताव है कि पी॰डी॰एस॰ के द्वारा गरीब लोगों को कम मूल्य पर तेल मिल सके?

श्री सभापति: मंत्री जी, आप दोनों प्रश्नों का जवाब दे दीजिए।

SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD: Sir, for the last two years, the allocation under PDS has been stopped, as a special case. It seems that prices have gone up because of the drought situation. Requests have been received not only from the State Government of Gujarat

but also from other States in the country, under Tariff Rate Quota to allow the State Governments to import this edible oil. As I said, it is cleared by the Ministry of Commerce under the Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) with 45 per cent excise duty ...(*Interruptions*)...

प्रो॰ अलका क्षत्रिय: सभापति महोदय, मैंने यह प्रश्न नहीं किया है। मेरा सवाल अलग है। मेरा सवाल यह है कि.....

SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD: The Ministry of Commerce has cleared this proposal and it is with the Ministry of Finance ...(*Interruptions*)...

प्रो॰ अलका क्षत्रिय: मेरा सवाल तो पहले सुन लीजिए। उन्होंने गलत जवाब दिया है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Telephone Lok Adalats

*325. SHRI VIJAY SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Telephone Lok Adalats held in Bihar during the last three years to mitigate the public grievances in the State, year-wise;

(b) the number of complaints disposed of during each year;

(c) the number of complaints pending before the Lok Adalats in the State; and

(d) whether it is proposed to hold more sittings of Lok Adalats in order to dispose of pending cases at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Details of Telephone Adalats (No Telephone Lok Adalats are held in Department of Telecom) held in Bihar during the last three years are as follows:—